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HEAD OF AVALOKITA, COPPER GILT  
THIBETAN

## ORIENTAL DECORATIVE ART



PENDANT, REPOUSSÉ GOLD  
NORTH INDIAN

THE usefulness and importance of the Museum collections of Oriental decorative art have been materially increased by a purchase shown to the public this month for the first time. This acquisition includes a comprehensive collection of Indian jewelry, a unique group of Thibetan goldsmiths' work, a number of Indian gold brocades, two sets of Chinese head-dresses made for Manchu princesses, a large Chinese temple hanging in appliqué, and two gilded bronze deities of Thibetan origin. These objects were all brought together by Mr. Lockwood de Forest, the artist, who recently visited the East, largely in the interest of our Museum, and who has used his own relations with India, of many years' standing, for our benefit. Because of the intrinsic value of the many specimens of jewelry, all of the smaller objects are exhibited in the Gold Room, where they will remain for the present at least; while the brocades and the two statues are shown temporarily in the Room of Recent Accessions before they receive a more permanent place in the Museum galleries. The various classes of material are described below under separate headings.

## THIBETAN JEWELRY

Thibet has been a mystery for centuries, since the Lama hierarchy, following a policy of exclusion, allowed no European to enter

its sacred capital at Lhasa. As a result, knowledge of modern Thibet and Thibetan art has been largely derived from the reports of a few explorers and from objects carried over the trade routes to China or by the Nepalese and Bhutanese traders down to India. However, with the English punitive expedition of 1904, under Colonel Younghusband, Lhasa was entered and a trade treaty arranged, so that in the last few years more light has been shed upon the characteristics of the native arts and crafts.

Thibetan art is an imitative one, based very largely upon Indian and Nepalese models, just as the national religion has for its basis the Buddhism of India. Furthermore, it is a hieratic art, the production being very largely in the hands of the Lamaseries or monasteries, which number in their ranks nearly one half of the entire population. It is of work of this type that the greater part of this collection is composed: three statues, a series of jewelry ornaments for the decoration of the statues, sacred objects to be placed before the images, amulet boxes, and a few articles of personal adornment.

The collection is thought to be unique, as comparatively few specimens of Thibetan jewelwork have been brought out of the country and no other museum, even in India, is said to show such a number of elaborately jeweled examples.

Of chief interest is the full-sized head of Avalokita, the patron saint of Thibet. This is of copper repoussé overlaid with gold, with an elaborate five-pointed tiara. The ears have the customary prolonged lobes—a sign of wisdom—pierced for the attachment of jeweled earrings, and the forehead bears the sacred urna or luminous mark which distinguishes the Buddha or Bodhisattva. It is interesting to compare this with the head of Avalokita, acquired by the South Kensington Museum in 1911, which is supposed to have come from the great temple at Shigatsé.

The two other statues are of Drolma, the Goddess of Mercy, called in Sanskrit *Tārā*—perhaps the most popular of all Thibetan deities—for while most of the other gods cannot be approached except

through the mediation of a lama, the poorest layman can secure her immediate attention by a direct appeal. These figures are of cast copper, decorated with chased and incised work overlaid with gold. They are represented standing in mystic attitude on lotus thrones, which are fitted with detachable aureole-backs bearing mythical figures amid scrolled clouds and conventional flames.

jewelry are five ornaments, as well as a large plaque which was probably used as a cover for a copy of one of the Holy Buddhist Gospels. These five ornaments—the two plates, the cover of a libation bowl, the gold box used to keep the jewels of the idols, and the fifth, which recalls the form of the emblematic luck jewel—were placed on the altar in front of the sacred images. There is also a series of neck ornaments and



PLAQUE, JEWELLED  
THIBETAN

The partiality of the Thibetans for turquoise and coral is extraordinary, their ecclesiastical and personal jewelry being set with masses of these stones, as well as lapis lazuli, diamonds, emeralds, and a variety of semi-precious gems. The turquoise is particularly esteemed by the people, who attribute to it talismanic virtue, believing that the stone guards against the Evil Eye and brings good luck and health.

Among the examples of ecclesiastical

earrings, heavily jeweled and set in silver-gilt, which were used as decorations for the statues of the gods.

All the other objects can be classed as personal jewelry. The Thibetan is extraordinarily fond of personal adornment and practically the entire population wear charm boxes (*gawo*) suspended around their necks. There are three of these *gawo* in the collection. Originally each contained some unintelligible Sanskrit words, or perhaps a bit of the gown of a saintly lama

—anything that would be efficacious in warding off the various accidents which might overtake the bearer. The collection includes a number of earrings, two among them being of the long variety worn singly in the left ear by men of consequence. Of women's earrings there are several pairs, all heavily jeweled, so heavily in fact that usually a little strap passes over the ear to take the weight off the lobe. Other examples of women's jewelry are circular plaques for the hair and a heavy silver girdle of a type used partly for ornament and partly as the means of support for the silver implements of the toilet, worn on jeweled chatelaines, two of which are included in the collection.

W. M. M.

#### INDIAN JEWELRY

In the complex and highly organized national life of India, jewelry has passed from the condition of a desirable but useless adornment to that of a prime necessity, serving as a badge of caste, a favorite offering to the gods, and a most popular means of investing private fortunes. From the cradle to the grave, from the lowest rank to the highest, the racial taste for personal adornment in both men and women has always amounted to a passion among the various Indian peoples, and from remote periods jewelry has had a high place in native poetry and legend.

Throughout the country it is the religious duty of a wife to wear jewelry for her husband's pleasure, as it is required of a widow to put aside most of her ornaments during the rest of her life. The age of a child is shown by the jewelry worn, just as an unmarried girl is indicated by her necklaces, and a married woman by a peculiar armlet or bangle, and in some regions, the nose-ring, invariable as the wedding-ring of the West. Such ornaments are serious and inevitable and when a woman is too poor to afford gold and silver, she substitutes the same objects made in silk or cotton thread, if she be of high caste, and of brass or zinc, if low. Whole families will often borrow money at a ruinous rate of interest in order to pro-

cure the jewelry which custom has prescribed as obligatory. Many gems and certain forms are thought of as amulets, while adherents of various sects wear jewels of fixed number and pattern in honor of their particular deities. Each member of the body is made to carry its share of ornaments, which are most varied in shape and decoration, and include necklaces, bracelets, rings for ears, fingers, toes, and nose, as well as anklets, armlets, belts, head-pieces, and many other types. A prince will have great stores of such things, displaying his splendor by a constant change of necklaces and trappings, while a rich man or banker carries about on his back a large part of his capital in the form of jewelry. Travelers also invest their funds in ornaments which they wear and sell bit by bit as need arises, and almost every family has its hoarded equipment of jewelry, which is as useful as coin in business transactions. Statues of the gods are hung with jeweled offerings; elephant and horse-harness, palace and temple furniture, arms and armor are still sometimes made of gold, silver, and gems; while in times not long past even favorite temples and pavilions were enriched with goldsmiths' work in the form of necklaces hung around columns and in windows, both without and within. The accumulated wealth of India in such material is enormous and not easy to exaggerate, although the very name of the country has always inspired avaricious dreams in the western imagination to which gold of Ophir and mines of Golconda are synonyms for boundless riches.

The history of Indian jewelry can be accurately followed from ancient monuments where the ornaments of divine personages are worked out in great detail. Many of the forms made and worn today are of great antiquity, having changed but little with the passage of centuries; while the names are often equally ancient, a number of those included in Panini's grammar of the fourth century B. C. being now employed. The primitive and still current custom of using garlands of seeds or of fresh flowers is reflected in pattern and name of many jeweled ornaments,



GOLD NECKLACE, INDIAN  
SHOWING CLASSICAL INFLUENCE



JEWELLED NECKLACE  
JAIPUR OR DELHI

which often suggest in form the flowery originals from which the types derive. Thus a certain kind of gold beadwork is called the *champakali* or "champa-flower bud," while a particular necklace is referred to as a "garland of enchantment," the *mohan mala*, and earrings are termed "ear-flowers," or *karanphul*.

Other kinds of goldwork reflect very strongly the influence of Greek and Roman civilization, which first penetrated into India with Alexander the Great and was several times revived, leaving its chief imprint on the sculptures of Gandhara, of which a good collection is owned by the Museum. A number of the unjeweled bracelets and necklaces now shown in the Gold Room might be easily mistaken for ancient classical ornaments from the shore of the Mediterranean, were they not obviously the modern repetitions of time-honored types preserved through twenty centuries by Indian workmen tenacious of tradition. Actual specimens of early gold jewelry are, however, difficult to find, because of the custom of frequently melting up and reworking the most intrinsically valuable of the family or temple possessions; and it is doubtful whether many of the Museum pieces antedate the eighteenth century, while the majority of those included in the purchase probably date from a later period.

As has been said, artistic traditions of pattern and design are carefully cherished by the native *sunar* or goldsmith; but recently a great and inevitable change has taken place through the introduction of European methods and ideas, and the old forms are either marked for destruction or have already died out. Much of the contemporary jewelry used in India is made after bad European models and the pieces are extremely meretricious in effect, although materials and workmanship are practically as good as ever. The collection acquired by the Museum includes the older jewelry, which shows pure Indian types, free from the modern European taint which has penetrated so disastrously through the East. The native goldsmith's decline in taste, however, should really be fastened on his employers, whether jewelry mer-

chants, who handle such wares in quantities, or native princes who have brought back European ideas to be worked out at home. The *sunar's* position has always been that of a workman, often attached to one particular merchant or family, who brought his simple tools to the employer's house and there utilized the materials given him, following designs made by some independent artist or else dictated by the prospective owner. In outlying places one goldsmith will make a piece of jewelry complete from the beginning of the process to the end, but the best work is not produced in such a way and for more elaborate specimens one must go to the large cities, where a division of labor is practised and a number of skilled artisans of different sorts will labor in succession on a single article. The jeweler, however, plays an important part in national life, his profession is very well regarded, and his caste rank comparatively high, although his reputation for dishonesty forms the subject of many sharp proverbs.

The gold and much of the silver used is imported, but the jewels are a native product and besides many semi-precious varieties include emeralds, diamonds, rubies, and pearls, all of which are found in great quantity in various parts of the country. The native lapidary prefers to cut his clear stones in cabuchon form or table-topped, rather than faceted, as is the European method, although the latter style is making some headway, with unfortunate results when used in native setting. The favorite Indian procedure is to back the stone with foil and imbed it in gold, raising a bezel all around and flush with the jewel; and when a considerable surface is encrusted in this way the effect is sumptuous and splendid, as may be seen from several necklaces in the Museum collection. Another method of using jewels is to drill and string them either quite simply or else with gold ornaments interspersed. Pearls are grouped in prodigal masses, generally in conjunction with colored stones but rarely with much gold. Paste jewels are also made in quantities and often set in the same piece with genuine stones so that it is difficult to distinguish between the two. When paste



alone is used, the setting may be as elaborate as for real gems, since the native craftsman as a rule does not allow the amount of his labor to be governed by the value of his materials.

Lac is a favorite addition to goldwork and is made either into beads of various colors, sometimes painted and gilt, or else used as a filling for the very thin gold

necklace or bracelet handed over to the customer.

Another means of enriching metal is enameling, which the Indian workman has brought to a state of high technical perfection. His method is that termed in Europe "champlevé," where the surface of a solid piece of gold, silver, or copper is carved out and the depressions filled with



PEARL ANKLET, DELHI

repoussé in which the sunar excels. Some of the most decorative ornaments in the collection illustrate this technique. A curious sidelight on native business methods is shown in the purchase of such a piece, from which, before a price can be fixed, the vendor insists on melting out the lac or wax filling, so that the exact weight of the gold alone can be calculated and an established per cent added for workman's labor. After an accurate valuation is thus found, each bead is laboriously refilled and the

enamel, which is then fixed by a fusing heat and finally polished flush with the ground. The range of Indian enamel colors is wide, but a clear ruby red, a translucent green, and an opaque white are most characteristic and most often combined. Nearly all first-rate jeweled ornaments are enameled with fine patterns in the back, so that the reverse of a necklace or pendant may be finer in effect than the right side. The art of enameling is largely confined to Northern India, and Jaipur is

famous as excelling all other centers of manufacture, although a number of localities produce a limited amount of coarser enamel. Jaipur work is well represented in the Museum collection.

As to the provenance of the other pieces purchased by the Museum, numbering in

come of late so much less rigid that jewelry of any type may be found in almost any part of the peninsula. Elaborate conventions, of course, exist and the strict Parsee does not wear the jewels of the Hindu, or the Mohammedan of either, or one village those of the next; but types are repeated in widely distant regions, and the differences really exist more in the manner of wearing than in the form of the ornaments. The subject is discussed in detail by Colonel T. H. Hendley in the *Journal of Indian Art*, vol. XII, and also by A. P. Charles in his monograph on Gold and Silver Ware, one of the official reports prepared for the British Government in its effort to stem the decadence which for a generation has threatened with extinction the art of the Indian jeweler and goldsmith. In the Museum collection, as has been said, the endeavor has been made to include only such pieces as represent the older and purer types; and as these are every day passing out of sight, the collection has a double interest in that it will probably be impossible to procure similar specimens again. The needs of the producing Occidental jeweler were another element which entered largely into the forming of the collection, and any one actively interested in gem setting and goldsmiths' work should find here valuable suggestion as to both technique and design, since the majority of the pieces parallel in use our contemporary western jewelry, and the more exotic ornaments were not included.



PORTION OF SCARF (SARI)  
IN GOLD BROCADE

all one hundred and two examples of gold jewelry and eighteen of silver, it may be said that they were found mostly at Ahmedabad on the west coast, but that the place of manufacture of a large proportion was probably Delhi, which is the center of the jewelry trade at the present day. Gold ornaments travel all over India and the local customs of wear and form have be-

#### INDIAN TEXTILES

The fifteen examples of Indian weaving are shown in the Accessions Room. They include three *jama* or full-dress coats made of brocade woven in silk, cotton, gold, and silver, a variety of textile known as "kin-cob," the best production of the Indian loom. An unusual piece is the so-called throne carpet from Gujarat, cotton printed in color and gold by an interesting process involving the beating of gold leaf into the cloth, and the use of block printing and resist dyeing. The other textiles are all *saris*, the long scarfs used by women as an outer garment or robe, and one of the most



picturesque features of Indian costume. These saris are chiefly of loosely woven cotton almost veil-like in lightness, ornamented with designs interwoven in gold and silver with very decorative results. Silk is sometimes used, but as the Mohammedan is forbidden by law to wear pure silk, cotton is generally mixed in. The borders and ends are the most highly ornamented parts and the pattern work lavished on them is very fine. The type is ancient and similar stuffs have been widely exported both East and West since before the Christian era, the art of weaving being one of the oldest and most perfect which India has developed. Many passages in classical literature seem to refer to materials brought out of India, and prized as more beautiful than anything the West could produce.

#### CHINESE OBJECTS

A large temple hanging in appliqué exhibits a method of decoration rather uncommon in the Far East. The subject is the Bodhisattva called in Japanese Mandjus'ri, who rides on a monster and represents the apotheosis of transcendental wisdom. The hanging dates from about the sixteenth century and comprises a considerable variety of early brocades. The two complete head-dresses made for Chinese princesses, and the unmounted ornaments forming a third set, have the interest which every example of Chinese workmanship possesses. Each set consists of about a dozen pieces of very fine goldsmiths' work, richly ornamented with pearls and semi-precious stones, forming flowers and butterflies which vibrate with every movement of the wearer and produce an unreal and fantastic effect. The ground-work is made of plates of gold pierced and carved and overlaid with feathers of the kingfisher bird, which in their bright blues and greens outrival any enamel. Head-dresses of this kind are peculiar to ladies of the Manchu nobility, and these examples come from the family of Prince Lui for whom they were made about the middle of the nineteenth century. The manufacture of similar goldsmiths' work has practically ceased.

D. F.

#### A CHINESE LANDSCAPE

A RECENT copy of the *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* contains an article by Dr. John C. Ferguson on Wang Ch'uan. The picture to which reference is made is Wang Ch'uan Villa, by Kuo Chung-shu of the Sung Dynasty, and is described in the catalogue of Chinese paintings (No. 18) issued by the Museum. The following extracts from the article will be of interest:

The landscape, of course, refers to Wang Ch'uan, this place being as closely linked in Chinese literature with the name of Wang Wei as Stratford-on-Avon is with Shakespeare. Wang Ch'uan was neither a large nor an important place when Wang Wei built a house there as a refuge from the cares of the world. It would never have been known outside of its immediate neighborhood if it had not been the residence of Wang Wei and the subject of his famous poem.

In the mountainous district of the southern part of Lan-t'ien, on the banks of a small mountain stream which wanders down through the valley, Wang Wei built a home for himself. His had been a stormy, nervous life. As a youth he must have been of a reflective turn of mind, for it is said that he could compose poetry at nine years of age. His course of life was rapid and eventful. He attained to the highest literary rank, and to a responsible position in the government service. The rebel An Lu-shan admired his ability and carried him off into captivity, where he tried in vain to compel Wang Wei to use his talents in favor of the rebellion. Wang would not even curry favor with his captor by writing verses to entertain guests. Through the prolonged efforts of his brother Wang Tsin, he was finally released and brought back to the capital, but his reckless independence of spirit landed him in further trouble with the princes. He preferred his literary and religious friends to those whom he found in court circles. He did not hesitate to condemn the extravagance and excesses of the palace life. Public service, with

its attendant ceremony and display, was hateful to him, and he longed for the quiet of the mountains where he could live in peace. He had lost his wife when he was only thirty-one, and he never took to himself another. It was a chastened, lonely man, introspective by habit and sharpened by a full experience of the busy activities of official life, who took up his abode at Wang Ch'uan. He was in the prime of life, and had an intense love of nature. By the side of a mountain stream in a quiet valley he built his home, and here he was visited by literary friends, but chiefly by Buddhist priests.

Wang Ch'uan is famous in Chinese literature for the two reasons of its being the subject of one of the best poems, and the name of one of the most famous paintings. The marvel is increased by the fact of the poem and the painting having been the product of the same genius—Wang Wei.

The poem and the picture both represent Wang Ch'uan as a place of splendor and magnificence, but this must be understood in the sense of poetical license. Wang Wei could only have had a very humble cottage in this secluded spot. If it had been otherwise, he would have attracted the attention of the rapacious myrmidons of the court, and the place would have been confiscated. Neither the poem nor the picture has been misinterpreted in Chinese literature. It is well understood that such a place as is depicted existed only in the realm of fancy. Wang Wei's fancy, helped by the genius of his friend P'ei Ti, clothed a barren hillside with beautiful, rare trees, with spacious courtyards, with a broad stream upon which boats plied and on whose bank a pretty fishing pavilion stood, with a deer park, with storks and birds—all the delights of eye and ear were brought together in this one lovely spot by the fancy of a brilliant genius. Life had been hard and severe for him, but his spirit was untamed. It reveled in all of the sensuous delights which it could spiritualize, even though it had spurned them when they were thrust upon it.

The earliest copy of Wang Wei's painting which has come down to our present time is that of Kuo Chung-shu of the Sung Dynasty, and I have had the rare opportunity of making a careful and prolonged study of this remarkable specimen of Chinese art. It is in the form of a scroll on silk. It is sixteen feet one inch in length, and one foot and a half inch in height. There is a colophon by Chao Chung-mo, which is three feet and nine inches in length, and one by Yuan Nan, which is one foot and one inch in length. The silk is very finely woven and of dark yellow color.

There was ample scope for the master of *chieh-hua* in painting Wang Ch'uan. The name "chieh-hua" does not refer to landscape, but to buildings in a landscape. These buildings should be correctly drawn as to dimensions, and when such correctly drawn buildings are the chief feature of a picture, the picture is called "chieh-hua". In such work, Kuo Chung-shu was a master. The scroll contains eight groups of buildings, and one of these groups—Wang K'ou Chuang—is an especially difficult subject. The whole scroll is classed as a landscape, but the portions of it in which the buildings are the outstanding feature are *chieh-hua*. The most beautiful of these buildings is the Bamboo Rest House. This building has no roof. The four walls of rectangular shape are very thick. There is a pair of doors at the front and back, and on each side of the doors there are windows. The building is in the midst of bamboo trees which reach down to the water's edge. Here a boat is connected with the shore by a plank on which a servant is carrying two parcels strung on a pole over his shoulder. The boatman is on the back of the boat looking out for its safety, and another person is shouting directions to the carrying coolie from the mat-house on the boat. Following the coolie are two other persons. This rest-house was a place of retirement where the light of the sun or moon could be enjoyed without being exposed to the gaze of any onlooker.

Wang Wei's stanza concerning this house is most beautiful.

"Sitting alone where the bamboo grows  
The harp sings to me its sweet tune  
Hid by the trees where no man knows  
I am greeted with light from the moon."

# A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DOORWAY

THE doorway in the style of Sir Christopher Wren which is included in the list of recent accessions, should prove of considerable interest, not only to lovers of beautiful things, but more especially to architects; for no single phase of the late Renaissance architecture in England carries with it more of dignity and of stateliness. One of the charms of London are these doorways, which one finds tucked away here and there in curious out-of-the-way streets and districts, once haunts of fashion, but long since left behind and devoted to more humble uses. This example came from a house known as 25 Crutched Friars in a district close to the Tower of London, at one time occupied by the wealthy city merchants. All this neighborhood was demolished in 1913 to make room for the new buildings of

the Port of London Authority, who control the Thames shipping. At that time the fittings of these old houses were sold at auction and a great commotion was raised as to the advisability of allowing such examples of old woodwork to be distributed, the contention being that they should be preserved in the English museums.

With the great fire of London in 1666 came Wren's opportunity and for fifty years he dominated the architectural field, both by the quantity and by the finished quality of his work establishing the national form. This doorway cannot definitely be ascribed to Wren himself, but its similarity to a Wren doorway in the South Kensington Museum, the beauty of proportion and line, and the delicacy of the carving, place it definitely in what is called the School of Wren. It dates in all probability from the last quarter of the seventeenth century. It is entirely in pine, the carved lead fanlight glazed with the old glass. The original bell-pull and lock are still in place; and while there is reason to believe that this is the original door, the knocker, letter plate, and handle were probably added at a slightly later date.

W. M. M.





#### UNE PROMENADE DES TOILETTES

IT is perhaps presuming to divert the attention of our readers from the serious side of art to any subject so apparently trivial as a collection of dolls; but in these midsummer days when the reading public is clamoring on every side for "light" reading, it may not be amiss to steal a little space from the usual trend of our studies to exploit a subject more or less alluring, even though the introduction of such subject may be considered by some as an intrusion upon the field of art. In the present instance also, the reason for such intrusion, if so it may be termed, amply justifies it; and even were this not true, these dainty manikins that mirror the styles of bygone days are, in a way, quite the equal of the modern woman in their ability to charm. Indifferent indeed is he who can withstand, for instance, the fascination of the Burgundian lady with her placid features surmounted by a towering head-dress, reflecting the dignity of an original who, with the folds of her sumptuous robes gathered about her, moved with a majesty and beauty all her own through the halls of some mediaeval castle; or again the quaint Nuremberg maiden, whose tranquil poise—a marked contrast to the extravagant gaiety of the delightful beauties of the French court—suggests none of the rush and turmoil of twentieth-century life.

In a group of models of this kind, in which the different periods are arranged in sequence, one is impressed with the truth of the oft-repeated statement that there is nothing new under the



sun; fashions invariably repeat themselves and any given mode can usually be traced to some type of a century or two earlier. The history of costume presents an ever-shifting scene in which the fads and fancies of our ancestors are pictured in their various stages of evolution. The insatiable demand for novelty is no feminine trait of recent development; for in this the twentieth-century woman in no way differs from her forbears who brought upon themselves the ridicule of an eighteenth-century rhymester whose following lines decry the instability of fashion in his day:

"Now dress'd in a cap, now naked in none;  
Now loose in a mob, now close in a *joan*;  
Without handkerchief now, and now buried in ruff;  
Now plain as a Quaker, now all of a puff;  
Now a shape in neat stays, now a slattern in *jumps*;  
Now high in French heels, now low in your pumps;  
Now monstrous in hoop, now trapish, and walking  
With your petticoats clung to your heels like a maul-  
kin;  
Like a clock on the tower, that shews you the  
weather,  
You are hardly the same for two days together."<sup>1</sup>

With each succeeding epoch, however, the vagaries of Dame Fashion seem to reflect an ever-increasing tendency to emancipate feminine charm from the rigid severity of the scholastic lines by which in the early days it was hampered. Take, for instance, the Italian model of the fourteenth century: the entire costume is built up on formal lines that are but a slight variant from the regulated garb of a cloistered nun—a style admirably

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Fairholt. *Costume in England*, London, 1846, p. 392. Quoted from the *Universal Magazine*, 1780.





adapted to harmonize with the mediaeval architectural setting; the simple folds of the heavy hand-wrought fabric of the dress, the flowing veil, and the close-fitting cap concealing every vestige of hair, all bespeak the strict formality of an ascetic age. A greater freedom for the display of individual taste, and an increasing tendency toward extravagant display, are shown in the jeweled head-dress that soon came into vogue—a freak of fashion which, let us hope, may have held some slight recompense for her whose features were bereft of the softening influence of a becoming coiffure. This popular fad of the Middle Ages is only another instance of the extreme to which feminine fancy will sometimes rush in its feverish pursuit of fashion; the same freakishness appeared again in the extravagant ruffs of the sixteenth century and again in the grotesque "scaffoldings of hair" perpetrated by the French hairdressers of the court of Louis XVI. But, linger as one may over these novelties of earlier fashion, one is bound to be lured on by the fascinations of the quaint little ladies of the nineteenth century in their beruffled gowns and poke bonnets. These later types are in line with the costumes in the collection bequeathed to the Museum in 1911 by Mrs. Maria P. James, which have proved most helpful to students in design, and it is to supplement these that the present collection has been arranged. The increasing demand for costume material in the study room has proved the value of models of this type, and it has been felt that at this time, when the American designer is cut off from European sources of inspiration, a collection<sup>1</sup> that would represent in miniature the evolution of the modern costume from the style of earlier days might prove helpful in many ways to those interested, and afford a broader appreciation of the subject than is to be gained from illustrations in books.

The models have been chosen from paintings of the Old Masters, from tapestries, and from standard authors on costume. Every detail has been carefully worked out, and while original materials

<sup>1</sup>Similar to the Foucault Collection of dolls in the Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris.

of the period were not available, and in fact would not be desirable in miniature models, fabrics have been selected corresponding in texture and design as nearly as possible to those in vogue at the dates specified. The figures measure about fourteen inches in height, and while a uniform model has been used throughout the series, the difference in the dressing of the hair and the varying lines of the head-dress give to each an expression of individual charm. Some thirty different styles are illustrated and, while this falls far short of being a complete series, it gives a general idea of some of the more salient features of women's costume from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. The collection will be temporarily displayed in the Room of Recent Accessions.

F. M.

#### COLUMBIA SUMMER SCHOOL VISIT

THE visit to the Museum, which has become a recognized number in the programme of excursions planned for the Columbia Summer School students, occurred this year on Thursday, July 8th. As usual, the students met in the Lecture Hall, where they were welcomed by the Secretary of the Museum and told such general facts about the extent and arrangement of the collections as would make their initial visit and all subsequent visits more definite in purpose and so more profitable. In smaller groups, each under the guidance of a member of the staff, they then saw whatever part of the collections they individually desired.

#### SATURDAY EVENING ARRANGEMENTS

SATURDAY evenings the Gold Room (II: C 32) and the room in Wing H (II: H 23) in which the collection of miniatures lent by Mr. J. P. Morgan is installed are closed to the public.

From six until ten o'clock Saturday evenings sketching and copying are permitted in the Museum. By this extension of student privilege, in effect for the past year and a half, the Museum aims to accommodate those who are employed during the day.

AN EXPLANATORY LABEL FOR  
HELMETS

A MUSEUM, like a person, is apt to have special ideas in matters of labeling. In many instances labels give little more than a name, some museums believing that the objects should speak for themselves. Other museums, sympathizing with Professor G. Brown Goode, prepare labels which give information to the hungry—in large portions. Either extreme has evidently its good and bad features. Short labels irritate an intelligent reader by telling him that a spade *is* a spade, and a really long label, unless written in a masterly way, is avoided by nearly every one; for, sooth to say, an outsider does not often come to a museum with a fixed intention of learning at any cost. He likes, rather, to “nibble” and he is apt soon to get tired. If, therefore, a curator wishes to find how his labels are read and how they could be bettered, he should hover about his own cases and listen to what his callers say to one another—reversing his manners (and bruising his emotions sometimes) for the good of his department!

There is no question that long labels will sometimes be read; but one hardly knows beforehand just which objects are the most attractive. The ones which you and I would select are often by no means those which appeal to the general public. To such a degree is this true that even the mildest curator may decide to write his labels as he is convinced they ought to be written, “in the sight of God,” and let the public enjoy them or not. I have often noticed that people will be drawn to a long label if there is a picture in it, and a diagram, large and complicated, is sometimes appreciated by visitors whose externals do not suggest studious habits.

In a general way, I have come to the conclusion that a visitor likes to see the reasons for things—more often indeed than many imagine. And he is confused by dissociated objects: he feels satisfied if what he sees in the cases can be brought together in his mind as belonging to a *plan*. He knows that kinds and styles grade into one

another and he has a notion that the first form begat the second, perhaps in a vaguely evolutionary way. Now I believe that this is a widespread trait or state of mind which can be taken into account in our label-writing. In this direction it seems at the outset, I admit, unpromising to prepare labels which deal with general questions, say in the matter of evolution;<sup>1</sup> but if this can be done successfully, the return is worth the time and trouble it costs. For instance, I am inclined to believe that an interesting and very instructive diagram might appear in an exhibition of ancient furniture to show the changes which have taken place during the centuries in so familiar an object as a chair; or that in a gallery of ancient sculpture diagrams might attractively show the way in which the figure changed its mode of drapery during different centuries; or that picture-labels can point out that such objects as watches or clocks developed during the past three or four centuries in an orderly sequence; or that in the hall of arms and armor diagrams can indicate that swords, daggers, or pole-arms changed their shapes and structures in the course of time in regular progression. In the field of armor let us take a concrete example—the way in which the various forms of helmets arose from simpler beginnings.

In such a label, on page 175, we may trace the transformations which took place in helmets of usual form from early times down to 1700. In the diagram, one calls attention first of all to the nature of the object and its characteristic parts: it thus includes a picture of a well-developed helmet showing such structures as a bowl, crest, visor, ventail, chin guard, and neck-

<sup>1</sup> Evidently not strictly to be compared with the evolution of living beings, since these pass their changes along from parent to offspring, while “evolution” in objects represents only sequences in style. The latter kind of transformation, however, affords close analogies with the former and in some cases stops little short of true evolution—as when objects represent the work of the brains and hands of generations of the same family of artists—for here the product of organisms can be measured in terms of parent and offspring, somewhat in the fashion that the secretions of gland might be measured, a process which, all will admit, concerns true evolution.

plates. The remainder of the label would illustrate the way in which these structures came into being. We may look over the pictures of the various helmets and see at a glance that one oldest part was the bowl, or timbre, that the visor was next in point of age, and that the ventail, chin guard, and neck-piece were of later origin. The label should, obviously, speak for itself: none the less, it shows so broadly the history of the helmet that one is tempted to explain it in detail.

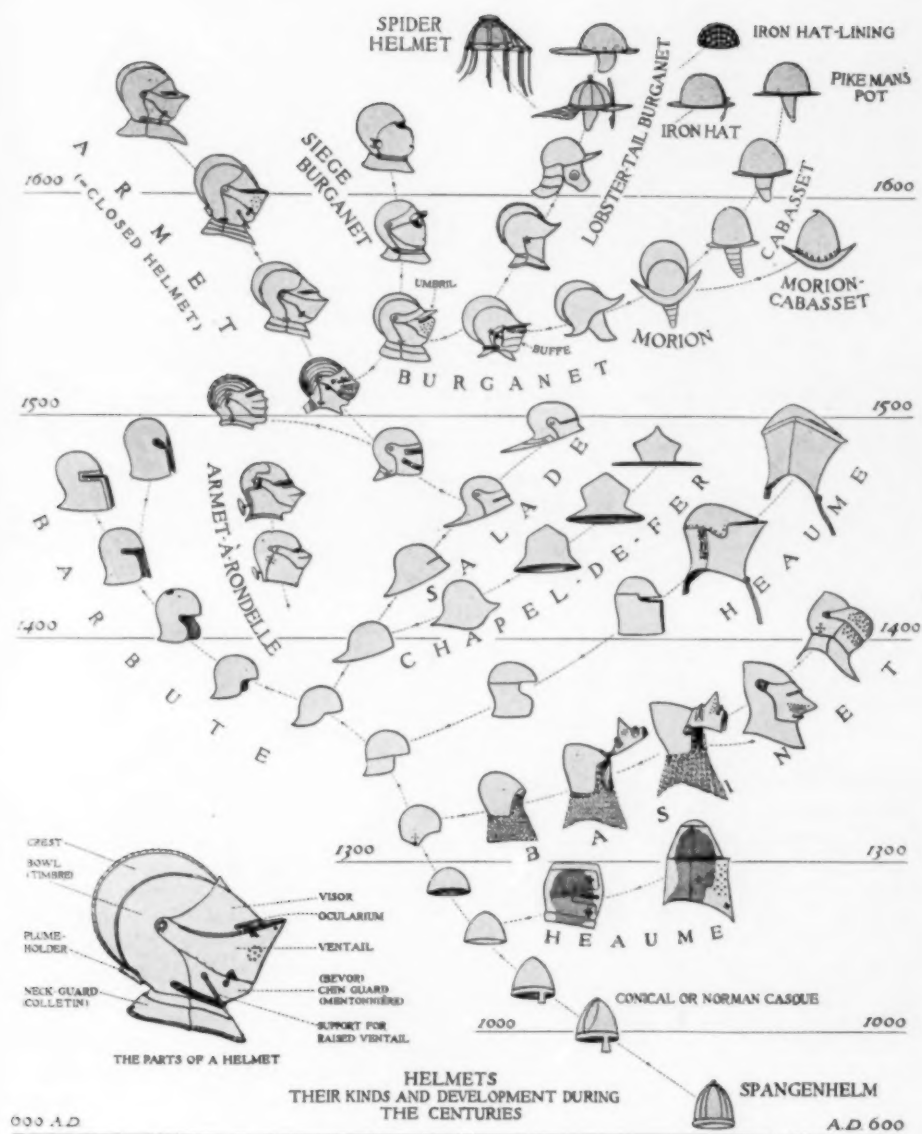
We notice, in the first place, that the label suggests the pictures in a zoological or geological handbook, where one traces the genealogy of horses, shells, or fishes. The "geological horizons" are in this case marked off horizontally as centuries—thus the lowest horizon in the present figure is about the time of the dispersal of the European nations, say A. D. 600.<sup>1</sup> Another level would be represented by the year 1000, others would be 1300, 1400, 1500, and 1600. And upon this chronological scaffolding helmets are shown "evolving." Thus, according to our diagram the usual type of an early European helmet was a "Spangenhelm", dome-shaped, made up of small pieces of iron. From this primitive form arose the Norman helmet of about 1000. This was merely a Spangenhelm made up of fewer, larger pieces, and with an innovation in the form of a projecting flange or nasal guard. The next stage in development produced a domed casque in a single piece with a reduced nasal guard.

Another stage evolved a tight-fitting skull-cap or primitive *basinet*. It was this head-piece which was sometimes inclosed in a second helmet which fitted loosely over the head like a great inverted pot, the so-called *beaume*, which was usually carried at the saddle-bow and laced in place over the helmeted head only when the knight went into the *mêlée*. This supplementary type, often pictured in documents dating just before and just after the year 1300, appears to have been difficult to fix in its right position; if it received a heavy blow, it ran the risk of becoming displaced and was thereupon worse than useless, for it

blindfolded the wearer, since its eye-slit was no longer opposite the eye. The weak feature of this head-piece was evidently the complicated way in which it was laced in place. Such a helmet we should call in biological jargon "highly specialized" (like a beast whose teeth are suited only for a special kind of food), and like a highly specialized animal could not long survive (for when the special kind of food gave out, the animal which could live only on that food perished). Hence we are not surprised to find that the period of usefulness of this *heume* was brief, and that a new form of defence took its place.

This new fashion developed in the fourteenth century from a close-fitting skull-cap or *basinet*, and a series of forms of *basinets* dating between 1300 and 1400 indicates a tendency for the head-piece to become taller and revert somewhat to the fashion of the ancient Spangenhelm. It was, however, an improvement upon the older type, inasmuch as it had adjustments for a hood or cape of chain mail which protected the chin, neck, and upper shoulders. It had also a face-guard, formed as a mask of iron which in early *basinets* swung down in place from the forehead but in later ones was hinged at the side. In Northern Italy the best type of *basinet* next replaced or copied the *camail* in the downgrowth of the sides of the *basinet*. This result, however, was accomplished only as a *tour de force* on the part of the late fourteenth-century armorer—in fact, today, after the accumulated experience of over four hundred years in metal-working, it would be difficult to find an artist who could copy such a head-piece in a single piece of steel. This *basinet*, known as the Aquilegian, was easily the culminating point in this series of early casques. On another line, however, arose a curious blunt-nosed *basinet*, heavily formed, having wide neck plates and a separately modeled chin. This arose about 1400 and was in many respects so perfect a closed helmet that we wonder why it was not made the point of divergence for types which appeared only at a much later period. In a word, it must have had in its structure some fundamental defect which prevented the armorer of the day from con-

<sup>1</sup> The history of the helmet in times earlier than this will be summarized in a separate label.



tinuing its use. Certainly it was heavy and unwieldy. It was set down over the head like a heaume and was a cage for the wearer's head rather than a helmet: it could not be satisfactorily fastened in position, its chin was immobile, and altogether it was too highly specialized long to survive.

It was again a simpler form, as explained in the diagram, which became the point of divergence for various forms of helmets. Thus the basinet which developed a neck guard formed of a separate piece seems to be the "ancestor" of a new line of heaumes, or heavy tilting head-pieces, which do not appear to be related to the ones which, as we noted, occurred about the year 1300. The later heaumes are shown in the diagram in four examples in which, decade after decade, the head-piece increased in size and was more and more perfectly adapted to its use. Thus this heaume came to be locked down to the breastplate and back-plate and could be used only when the wearer held his head in a certain position, as in bending forward in the saddle when tilting. Such a head-piece led to no further evolution.

It was a simpler form which once again must be sought as the "progenitor" of various types. Thus it was a small head-piece having a short neck guard not in a separate piece but arising from the timbre, which seems to have been the basal form of all the later kinds of head-pieces. In one line it gave rise to the *chapeaux de fer*, in another line to the *barbutes*, in still another to the *salades*, and, finally, most important, to the closed helmet which first appeared toward the middle of the fifteenth century.

The origin of the chapel-de-fer is clearly shown in the diagram. The latest of its type was a broad-brimmed hat of steel which arose from a simpler form with a sloping brim, which in turn arose from a wide, longish head-piece, i. e., one still having radial symmetry. The earliest chapel was depressed laterally and inclosed the sides of the head.

An equally interesting evolutionary series were the *salades* which developed extreme bilateral symmetry. At first they were produced backward so as to cover the nape of the neck. Later they developed in the

brow region a slot through which the wearer could see. In the next stage there appeared a separate plate which rotated in such a way as to form a visor. The latest forms of this head-piece had extremely long neck guards which were flexible and formed of separate pieces, so that the wearer could bend his head far backward.

Equally clear is the origin of *barbutes*. These were hood-like head-pieces developed from a single piece of metal, which came to inclose the face more and more perfectly, and even developed a nose guard. This last type of head-piece is interesting, since it resembles the most perfect helmet known in classical antiquity, the "Corinthian casque" of the Greeks. While it is possible that the most complete *barbute* may have arisen during the Renaissance as a result of the widespread study of classical antiquities, it is more probable, I think, that it had an entirely independent origin—a case of "parallelism," as the zoölogist says, when he contrasts the wing of the bat and the wing of the bird, i. e., things similar in form and use but different in mode of origin.

It will be seen that all of these head-pieces—*chapeaux*, *salades*, and *barbutes*—were faulty in so far as they have no well-attached chin defenses. As hat-shaped head-pieces they could not be held securely on the head. These objections were first overcome in the *armet*, as shown in the diagram. There was first developed (about 1450) the *armet à rondelle*—in many ways the most beautiful helmet which the art of the armorer ever devised. It is unlike later armets and it is even doubtful whether it belongs at all in the main line of their "descent." The *armet à rondelle* was really a *barbute* in which the cheek-pieces grew so wide that for convenience they became hinged to the top of the helmet, and closed below over a peg on the point of the chin. The visor, too, was archaic: it was the visor of a basinet but much reduced in size, still retaining, however, the basinet's curious hinge-like arrangement at the side. The neck region of this *armet* was protected by a *camail*, somewhat as in the earlier basinet, and it had at its back a disk, or *rondelle*, attached like a mushroom to a short, stout



stalk, which appears to have been used first as a protector for the fastening of the neck-gear of chain-mail and later was retained as an ornament. It is doubtful, I say, whether this kind of armet gave rise to the later armets as shown in the present diagram. It had already become too highly "specialized" in its attachment to the cape of chain-mail, as well as in its rondelle and its enormous cheek-flaps.

The origin of the later armets can, therefore, I believe, be better understood in the diagram by taking as a starting-point the curious head-piece shown as arising from the visored salades. This primitive armet was a salade which was deep in shape and closely modeled to the head. Its visor extended below the chin and was provided with breathing apertures which suggest crudely the lips of the wearer. The neck region had already been made flexible by the appearance of laminae such as one finds in late forms of salades. If we start with this form, the development of the various types of head-pieces of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can now easily be traced. From it arose a long series of closed helmets, *burganets*, *morions*, *cabasets*, iron hats, and, as the latest and most degenerate form of the helmet, a small metal hat-lining.

Studying some of these helmets in detail, we find that about the year 1500 splendid armets, or helmets, were developed: they were more perfect "functionally" than even the armet-à-rondelle: thus, their crown or timbre was complete, modeled closely to the entire cranium; they required no straps or laces to keep them in place; they needed no neck defense of chain mail; and they were provided with both chin-piece and visor which not only "fitted," but were more conveniently articulated, for both rotated from the same pivot. Clearly, therefore, this casque was easier to fix in place or to take off. At this time, too, fluted surfaces appeared in the metal to make the bowl of the head-piece relatively lighter and stronger. Some of these

helmets even had close-fitting necks which were so accurately moulded around the border of the neck-armor that they allowed the head-piece to rotate in a "track." The next stage in the development of the armet produced separate visors, that is to say, the upper half of the earlier visor became a separate piece but rotated always on the same pivot. Then arose various forms of crests and neck-gear, as shown in the figure.

On the one hand, *burganets* arose from armets developing a visor-like brim, like the peak of a cap. In late *burganets* (siege-pieces) this peak, or *umbril*, disappears: in earlier *burganets* which were designed for light use the chin region or *bevor* disappears, or is replaced by a demountable chin-guard (*bufte*). In these light *burganets* formal ear-tabs come to replace the heavier defenses of the side of the head. Also neck-guards, which were short in earlier types, became lengthened out, laminated, and flaring as in the Cromwellian "lobster tail" *burganets*. And in the last member of the series the neck-guard either became rudimentary, as in the curious spider helmet, or else was flattened out in a single heavy plate. *Morions* were clearly the derivatives of *burganets*, and *cabasets* were shortened-up *morions* in which the crescentic brow-and-neck guard was reduced to a short, flat brim. In this head-piece the crest or comb disappeared, after passing through a series of decadent forms. The latest effective helmets were pikemen's pots and iron hats; from them descended, in a degenerate line, iron hat-linings. In these the earliest were solid, shaped to the crown of a felt hat. They were next made lighter, sometimes by having holes cut in them, and later they became lighter still by being built up, basket fashion, of interlaced iron strips. In the last form of all they were formed as a series of bands so articulated that, when not in use, they could be folded up into a single piece or block and thrust into the owner's pocket.

B. D.

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JULY, 1915

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GLASS .....	†Bottle, with Indian mount of silver, Persian, seventeenth century .....	Purchase.
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\*Not yet placed on Exhibition.

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# BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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†Recent Accessions Room (Floor I, Room 6).

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